

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-10

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 NSC-07 NSCE-00 CIAE-00 INR-10

NSAE-00 RSC-01 DODE-00 PM-03 PRS-01 SAJ-01 ACDA-10

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R 291558Z MAY 74

FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9249

INFO USMISSION BERLIN

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMCONSUL LENINGRAD BY POUCH

USMISSION NATO

/USMISSION GENEVA 1901

C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 8103

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, GE, UR, US

SUBJECT: CANCELLATION OF FRG AMBASSADOR'S TV SPEECH

GENEVA FOR USDEL CSCE

REF: BONN 08412

1.

FRBAMBASSADOR SAHM AND A FIRST SECRETARY AT
FRG EMBASSY HAVE GIVEN US BACKGROUND ON CANCELLATION
OF SAHM'S SCHEDULED TV SPEECH ON OCCASION OF 25TH
ANNIVERSARY OF THE BASIC LAW. GERMANS ASKED THAT
DETAILS WHICH THEY PROVIDED BE VERY CLOSELY HELD.

2. IN EARLY MAY, SAHM SUGGESTED TO A PROMINENT
SOVIET TV COMMENTATOR THAT HE BE GIVEN THE OPPORTUNITY
TO SPEAK ON TV ON ANNIVERSARY OF BASIC LAW. COMMENTATOR
AGREED, ASKING ONLY THAT HE BE GIVEN SPEECH A FEW DAYS
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IN ADVANCE "IN ORDER TO ENSURE THAT TECHNICAL DETAILS,

SUCH AS TRANSLATION, CAN BE HANDLED."

3. FILMING OF SPEECH WAS SCHEDULED FOR 1000 HOURS ON MAY 24. SAHM HAD SENT SPEECH TO TV AUTHORITIES SOME FEW DAYS BEFORE AS REQUESTED ON MORNING OF SCHEDULED FILMING SAHM WAS ASKED TO DELAY ARRIVAL AT STUDIO. AT APPROXIMATELY NOON TV AUTHORITIES CALLED SAHM AND INFORMED HIM THAT THEY WERE HAVING DIFFICULTY WITH SENTENCE IN SPEECH WHICH NOTED THAT "THE FRG AND WEST BERLIN HAVE LONG HAD CLOSE TIES (ENGE VERBINDUNGEN)." SAHM INQUIRED WHETHER THE SOVIETS WERE ATTEMPTING TO CENSOR HIS SPEECH. SOVIETS REPLIED THAT THEY OF COURSE HAD NO SUCH INTENTION, AND THAT THEY WERE SIMPLY BRINGING TO HIS ATTENTION FACT THAT THEY WERE HAVING CERTAIN DIFFICULTIES WITH SENTENCE. SAHM ASKED WHETHER THE SOVIETS WERE BACKING AWAY FROM WORDING OF FOUR POWER AGREEMENT; SOVIETS VEHEMENTLY DENIED THAT THIS WAS A FACTOR. SAHM AGREED TO ASK BONN FOR INSTRUCTIONS ON CHANGING THE SENTENCE.

4. BONN SUGGESTED ALTERED SENTENCE WHICH WAS NEARLY A STRAIGHT QUOTE FROM THE QUADRIPARTITE AGREEMENT CITING CLOSE TIES. SAHM PASSED NEW FORMULATION TO SOVIETS AND NOTED THAT HE REMAINED AT THEIR DISPOSAL FOR FILMING, BUT THAT BETWEEN HOURS OF 1800 AND 2000 HE WOULD BE TIED UP HOSTING NATIONAL DAY RECEPTION. SOVIETS CALLED AT 1930 TO INFORM HIM THAT HE COULD COME TO THE STUDIO FOR FILMING, AND THAT THE SPEECH WOULD BE BROADCAST SAME EVENING; HOWEVER, THE SPEECH COULD NOT CONTAIN THE SENTENCE ON BERLIN. THE SOVIET PASSING THE MESSAGE QUICKLY ADDED THAT IT WAS HS AUTHORITIES' OPINION THAT THE SENTENCE "SIMPLY DID NOT BELONG IN A SPEECH COMMEMORATING THE BASIC LAW," APPARENTLY THEREBY INTENDING TO HEAD OFF ANY ACCUSATION THAT THE SOVIETS WERE NOT HONORING LANGUAGE OF QUADRIPARTITE AGREEMENT. SAHM, AFTER CONSULTATION WITH BONN, REPLIED THAT HE COULD AGREE TO NO SUCH CONDITION, AND CANCELLED THE FILMING.

5. FRG EMBASSY IS STILL WEIGHING SIGNIFICANCE OF SOVIET
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ACTIONS. ONE QUESTION, WHICH GERMANS HAVE NOT YET ANSWERED, IS WHETHER THE BERLIN REFERENCE WAS IN FACT GOVERNING FOR THE SOVIETS, OR WHETHER IT WAS MERELY AN EXCUSE FOR CANCELLATION OF A SPEECH THAT WAS OTHERWISE OBJECTIONABLE TO THEM -- PERHAPS IN A BASKET THREE CONTEXT. (SPEECH HAD CONTAINED REFERENCE TO VARIOUS CIVIL RIGHTS CONTAINED IN BASIC LAW.) THEY ARE ALSO NOT SURE HOW MUCH VOICE THE EAST GERMANS HAD IN THE

MATTER.

6. THE FRG EMBOFF AGREED THAT SITUATION MUST HAVE
PLACED SOVIETS, STILL PROBABLY SOMEWHAT UNSURE OF
RELATIONSHIP WITH NEW SCHMIDT GOVERNMENT, IN SOMETHING
OF A QUANDARY. HE NOTED THAT SOVIET PRESS HAS THUS FAR
BEEN REASONABLY KIND TO NEW GOVERNMENT.
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